The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

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THE FAITH SONG

WHY sings my heart so glad a song?
The wintry winds are chill,
The air is thick with ice and snow,
The meadow brook is still;
And yet the sun at dawn is red,
The brown trees tipped with gold,
Between the dark blue morning clouds
A very heaven's unrolled.

Perhaps gray sorrow touched thine eyes
And walking in her way,
Thou seest in the glorious dawn
Hint of immortal day.

The bud lies folded in the tree.
Soon the quiescent earth
Will wake to song and beauty,
In sweet mystery of birth.
And the glad song hidden in my heart
Throbs like imprisoned wings
As lark, from morning's fogs and damps,
Toward the high heavens sings.

Perhaps when sorrow walked with thee
She took thee to her heart,
And thou hast felt the Father love
Of which all are a part.

The world grows wider every day
Space calleth unto space.
I hear the human moan and prayer
Rise up to seek God's face.
Yet still my heart sings with great joy
As mothers croon again,
To calm the childish griefs and woes
And heal the childish pain.

When gentle sorrow touched thine eyes
She let the shadows fall;
And thou hast learned to see the bond
Which makes us brothers all.

I thank thee for the lesson, Lord,
Though weary was the way;
'Twas sorrow taught my heart the song
It singeth every day.

—*Mary Clarke Smith.*

SOME RULES FOR PERPETUAL YOUTH

SOME time ago we happened to be talking with a man who had just been celebrating his eightieth birthday. He was a very remarkable man, having done many fine things in his life, written many cheering words, and brought good cheer to many souls. Along with all this, he had kept young, hearty, buoyant, radiant up to eighty. He was as young, as optimistic, as ambitious at eighty as he had been at twenty. Everybody remarked upon his youthfulness. On his eightieth birthday a little group, of which the writer happened to be one, asked him the secret of his perpetual youth. Being a modest man he hesitated to talk too much about himself, but believing that it might help others, he consented. He said that he had six rules of life which he had formed in youth, and by which he had endeavored to live ever since. To them he attributed his health, his youthfulness, his joy in living, his peace of soul.

The first of these rules was as follows: He said that every morning when he arose he said: "I am God's child. Nothing can harm me today, and I have my Father's infinite energy to draw upon." What a rule wherewith to begin the day! One a child of God; born of the eternal and linked to it here in time; living on the earth but drawing strength from heavenly springs; springing from the earth in body, but born of God in spirit; walking here alone sometimes, but never alone, for one is hid in God! How such a rule changes life. The unfailing companionship of God, daily renewed, keeps one courageous and hopeful. This is the daily miracle of life, the un-

failing wonder. God will not let one of his children perish. God's child renews his youth every morning. It is the power of the Infinite flooding all his being. Nothing can cause him worry, nothing can make him afraid.

The second rule our friend gave us comes down among the homely, daily, ways of life, but these practical daily rules are often grounded in great, eternal principles. They are related to the immensities just as the flower is related to the sun and the earth. The rule was this: Every day to strive to render some kindness to some one, to speak some kind word, do some kind deed, to send everybody who comes near me away feeling more hopeful, more satisfied with life. Those who are seeking happiness grow old in the very quest. Those who, forgetting the quest, strive every day to impart happiness, find that continual happiness, sunshine, which is youth.

The third rule which our friend made for himself was that he would not allow the advance of years to sidetrack him from the great interests of the world, or deprive him of the society of of youth. He kept in touch with all the great movements to the end. He read all the newest books. He was in the forefront of all reforms. He was a clergyman, and he felt more at home in the clubs of the younger clergy than in those of the older. Here again is a great secret of youth. Who cannot recall old men, really old because they have become sidetracked in life, stopped growing when they were fifty or sixty, remained rooted in old customs, old traditions, and finally lost the zest for life? On the other hand, who does not recall men who grew with the growing world, and were always far ahead beckoning the world on?

Another rule, closely related, was this: Believe that the Golden Age is ahead, and not behind. This is Christianity. This keeps faith and hope alive. One can work for a city that is to come. It keeps one young when one believes that God has greater things in store for each new day.

Another rule was to have one particular interest to which he could turn at any time for rest from the general task of the day, and which was so engrossing a hobby or study that it had a dramatic element in it, an interest eagerly sought, that lasted through the years. This might be some particular phase of literature, it might be some period of history, some great man, some problem like immigration, international goodwill, or missions. He himself had been particularly interested in the growth of internationalism, and had collected everything that was written about it in book or magazine or paper; but any study that always lured one on would do.

Once more, he believed that one secret of youth was an unshakable faith that he was an immortal soul. If one believed this with all his heart, then it did not matter if toward the close of this life the body grew tired and the sinews stiffened. Does not the body grow tired at the close of every day? But one goes to sleep at night and awakens all refreshed in the morning. So if one is immortal, he knows that this life is but one day in the eternal years, one room in the many mansions of God. He grows tired, but he keeps on, works serenely, with calm joy, keeps in touch with great thought, great hopes, great feeling, for he knows that after a short sleep he shall awaken in another day and another world, refreshed, and ready to resume his tasks and press on from glory unto glory.—*Frederick Lynch, in Christian Work.*

LEARNING TO HEAR THE FALL INSECTS

THOSE who take pleasure in listening to bird songs have noticed that in early August the woods and fields become strangely silent. The birds are moulting and resting after the nesting season. Sometimes, for hours scarcely a bird note can be heard. Yet from every field, hedge and roadside there is a riot of melody, made by insects, that you can hear if you will take the trouble to learn how.

The musical insects—grasshoppers, katydids, crickets, locusts, and cicadas—are far more numerous than the singing birds; and when you have once begun to distinguish their individual notes, you will find apparently no end to the variety.

You probably know the field cricket, whose cheery notes come to your ear all day and all night from the near-by field or garden. There are other crickets, smaller than the field crickets, browner and with longer bodies, that inhabit the damp grass near ponds or swamps. At first you will scarcely hear them, but, as you gradually sharpen your ears by listening, you will become aware of many of the little musicians. Those crickets do not crawl up blades of grass; they live in dark crevices of earth, under thick-growing vegetation; it is difficult to see them. A rustle, a shadow, a quick movement, and they are silent But there is a fascination in searching that strange world, and in hearing the music of crickets close at hand. The notes are: *Dzt, dzt, dzt, dze-e-e,* repeated over. The end is a little lower than the rest.

You may already know the notes of the cicada, —sometimes incorrectly called the locust,— those notes that shrill and swell and rise and die in the hot air round the trees above streets or dry fields. *Zing-g-g-g* he says; and, if you have the good fortune to find him at his music, you will see his fat, cone-shaped body expanding and contracting. The expansion and contraction set in motion a number of small, tight-stretched

strings in a cavity near the base of the cicada's wings. The result is his marvelously loud and vibrant note.

Another interesting musician is the cone-headed grasshopper, who begins his rasping pulsations in the long blades of grass toward evening. He is a beautiful pale green insect with wings that are longer than his body. Like all true grasshoppers, he makes his music by rubbing together his "shoulder blades," which are as stiff as mica, and which produce vibrations that are intensified by a sounding-cavity in his body.

Another kind of grasshopper, smaller and chunkier, with red shanks, puts forth among scrubby woodland trees notes that are like the click of an angler's reel: *Tick, tick, tick, tick, cree-e-e-e.*

In the same sort of woodland you will find a tree-cricket that makes his music by raising his oval, transparent wings at right angles to his body and agitating them. The result is a soft, sweet trill, like the ringing of a very small electric bell.

A similar trill is produced in a different way by the locusts, which are distinguished from true grasshoppers by their short antennæ. Some utter their notes at night in weedy fields or in dry meadows, and use in the process not their wings but their legs. On a moonlit night, or with an electric flashlight, they can be found quite easily, for they crawl up weed-stems and sometimes cluster near the tops.—*The Youth's Companion.*

OVER ALL, GOD

As the years roll out and the years roll in, nothing can be more impressive than the fact that, work as we will, our plans are not sure of fulfillment. And yet through it all there runs a certainty and a design, to which human reason can only apply the term Providence. There is nothing as yet in nature to forbid faith. It makes but little difference to us how we define God, we have a personal relation to a something or somebody higher than ourselves, in whom and through whom, we live. A corollary of this great fact is that it is wisdom and eommon sense to make our subordinate planning accord to those great moral laws which express to us the will of the Oversoul. The child cries as soon as he is born, and man never gets quite over this instinct. He may or he may not formulate his prayers in words, he will certainly formulate them in his deed. The most brutish man cannot escape something of this sort, and religion as a science can be nothing else than the science of coöperation between man and God. Laying aside all superstition the most enlightened man finds this instinct for a supreme influence growing stronger as his wisdom increases. The tide of life is never quite lost as to its source. Father and child are one, as Jesus expressed it; they instinctively love. The Universal Fatherhood is felt in the universal sonship everywhere; and there is a mutual seeking and loving. It is not true that God puts forth an effort to rescue us from fallen conditions; it rather is true that the very existence of God is involved in noble doing.

Nor must we overlook the fact that early man was nearer the causative life than we are. What we argue about, he felt. No form of religion has existed that has not worked at this problem of life on the side of hope and love. Yet every religion has dropped into a pathetic state of distrust in God, and fear lest he should destroy instead of save. Coöperation with God has dropped into pacification and an effort at salvation through sacrifice. The hope of orthodox creeds is not in eternal personal activity, but in escape from life and the obligations of life. Is there not in nature a subtle principle that whoever in any way seeks selfish ends makes a total blunder; that self can never be happy except in its relations to others? No person can alienate himself in the slightest degree from any other person and so attain happiness. Asoka, the Buddhist, said, with keen insight, I will never accept a paradise of joy while any other one remains outside in misery. Calvin cannot be shut up in a heaven of real joy while Servetus is outside, for if Calvin be honest his self-seeking will gnaw at his heart; and if he be dishonest he is a liar even when he says he is happy. All the individual and social miseries which we suffer come from this self-seeking.

To be content that the God Will shall be our will, that is that right shall constitute the law of our daily life; to make the universal Cosmic Purpose our purpose; to cease this perpetual struggle for individual content, is the lesson which is forced upon us by the years. We are taught to give up the desire to escape from duty and responsibility; to become reconciled to the thought of endless obligatory labor. We are not constructed for eternal rest, nor for eternal joy as eliminated from eternal duty. That is not true religion which instigates us to get away from the troubles of existence. All joy hangs on victory, all victory on a contest. As we look forward there is but one hope worth the while, that is that we may have more power for right, more knowledge of the right, and at the end remain a child of God in doing and willing, rather than alone in singing and praying.—*E. P. Powell.*

Put faith in truth as mightier than error, prejudice, or passion, and be ready to take a place among its martyrs. Feel that truth is not a local, temporary influence, but immutable, everlasting, the same in all worlds.

For occasions do not make a man frail, but they show what he is.—*Thomas-a-Kempis.*

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB

Send all offers and requests for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 25 Fairmount Way, Quincy, Mass. Tel. Granite 1140

Please remember, when you see a request for a book in the Book Club, to write a card to Mrs. Nichols, asking "*Shall* I send such a book to such a person?" before sending it, else the person who requests it may receive several copies. When any one writes directly to you, asking for a book offered by you, send a card to Mrs. Nichols, saying that you *have* sent it. When you receive more requests than you can meet, send those to the Book Club to be printed here.

SPECIAL NOTICES

It will greatly aid those who are sending books, magazines, cards, and so forth, if all our correspondents who send requests for their children will take pains to mention their names and ages. Lacking such information, one is likely to make mistakes; for a boy of twelve and a girl of seven are not usually interested in the same things.

When requesting books for the first time, correspondents should always give, as reference, the name and address of their clergyman.

When correspondents move to a new address, notice should be sent either to our headquarters, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass., or to those persons who have been sending books and magazines.

It is necessary to state positively that the Cheerful Letter Exchange is not a "clothing bureau" and not a "charitable" society in the usual sense of the word. We do not undertake to send correspondents money, clothing or household goods. Letters asking for that sort of assistance cannot receive attention. Letters not signed cannot be printed.

Many people do care for just the kind of friendly service for which we are organized. We limit our efforts to them and their wishes.

Those who enjoy receiving books and magazines are asked to remember that they, in their turn, can give much pleasure if they will take pains to write to the persons who send such reading matter. In cases where no word of response goes back—not even to say that the books or magazines were received—senders may suppose the parcels were not welcome. Let us each do our share.

REQUESTS

1. Mrs. Jennie Agee, Spencer, Va., R. 1., Box 38, wants friends to know that she appreciates past favors and hopes to be remembered during the winter as she is confined to the house.

2. Mrs. Cooper Hatcher, Germanton, N. C., R. 1., thanks friends for quilt scraps that have been sent in the past and asks for more as selling the quilts is her only means of support.

3. Mrs. Ruffin Sheppard, Lawsonville, N. C., writes of her marriage on June 27 (née Elah Jessup). She will greatly appreciate any help in housekeeping, reading and scraps or thread.

4. Margaret Huddleston, Farmville, Va., Box 118, a little girl ten years old, asks for dolls' clothes and reading suitable for her age. Her mother would appreciate *Delineator* or *Needlecraft.*

5. It has been quite a while since I heard from any of you. Perhaps some of you remember me. My husband has not had much health since his operations, though he is feeling better now than he has for some time and can work some at light work. I have had quite a hard time since he has been sick. My health is not very good now. I only have one little girl. She will be five years old the ninth of December. My birthday is February 25. I will be very glad if the readers of *Cheerful Letter* will send me bits of Crochet thread, size 20. I want to make a table cover this winter and it takes quite a bit of thread. Will also be glad of any kind of scraps for quilts or pillow tops, if I am not asking too much. Mrs Walter Pendleton, Elamsville, Va.

6. A Bible is asked for by Miss Leona Brown, R. 3, Sunset, Texas.

7. Mrs. Lou N. Testerman, Helton, N. C., asks for reading for her daughter who is confined to her bed, also will be grateful for a Bible.

8. Miss Sadie Lee Colson, Wadesboro, N. C., R. 2., Box 138, a seventeen-year old girl, is badly crippled with rheumatism. Her parents are poor, her mother feeble and they are in need of reading and cheer.

9. C. C. Fraley, Richfield, N. C., writes: "We are poor laboring people living out in rural North Carolina, and do not have access to books. We have four children, two boys and two girls. They are in the primary grades except our oldest boy. I hope we may receive books for them as

we are not able to buy. I am a poor laboring man on the R. R. tracks and had no educational advantages. I shall appreciate any books on Bible study, poetry and anything that might help me along in my feeble work.

10. Silk pieces, cards or pictures are asked for by Mrs A. C. Hottinger, Hebron, Ohio.

11. Mrs. Dora Smith, Polkton, N. C., R. 1., Box 54, would like a shower of cards for her little boys' birthday on November 2. School commences in October, Sunday school is getting on nicely, and they are busy picking cotton now.

12. Mrs. E. E. Morgan, Palmerville, N. C., will be glad to receive some good reading for herself, her husband, and her two boys, who are in the sixth and eighth grades. She is also interested to receive books for her neighbors and friends to read. Mrs. Morgan lives in a community which is quite destitute of reading. There is no library within reach of her or her people. She will be glad to receive books of poetry, history, and good fiction, for her own reading and that of her friends, and any good books for children. She is especially anxious to get some good books on psychology and religion. She will not object to books that may be worn or soiled. She gives as reference Rev. Grover C. Phillips, Bear Creek, N. C.

13. Dear Cheerful Friends: It has been quite a long time since I have had a request printed, so after thanking you each and every one for past favors, I want to ask for reading for myself this winter, books or magazines that have been read. I will pass on all sent me. Should be glad of reading suitable for my two little granddaughters aged 12 and 6, and cards or picture books for the little two-year old baby.

I will be glad to get scraps of silk, woolen or cotton goods for quilt squares. I will be seventy-nine years old the 27th of September, but I am right active for one of my age and dearly love to piece quilts. I live with my youngest daughter and have been with her since my husband died in 1910. She, her husband and children are very agreeable and that makes life pleasant.

Hoping to hear from some of you soon and with thanks in advance, I am very truly. Mrs. S. A. Pedigo, Vinton, Va.

14. Mrs James Starling, Chilhowie, R. 2., Va., mother of six small children asks for reading for herself, and cards for the children.

15. Mrs J. E. Blevins, Crumpler, N. C., 4. W., Box 6, an elderly woman, asks for reading for herself and husband. The children are married and gone from home, and this leaves them lonely.

HAPPINESS

HAPPINESS is largely to be found in the development of this universal self within each one of us. There is little need to advise our friends to care for the individual self, with the imperious desires of the body and the acquired tastes of the mind. That part of our life is in no danger of neglect. But here is the larger self, the life we share with others, the one all-embracing life of God in which our lives exist, as the life-giving sap flows through root and branch and every leaf of the tree, however different root and branch and leaves may appear. And just because our lives have this universal, divine element, the best men and women are never satisfied with those things that simply minister to the physical and intellectual life, but they are always seeking a larger realization of themselves in human brotherhood. Such a life has its sorrows; plenty of them I suppose, since the larger our life is the more opportunities there are for pain to enter it. And yet the men and women who live such lives,—and who is not blessed by the friendship of such,—are they not to be called happy? Just because happiness means so much more than pleasure or contentment, because it is permanent and related to duty, we do speak of such lives as happy. They make us happy, and we believe they are themselves happy.

At the close of her great novel, George Eliot makes the disciplined and ennobled Romola say to the little Lillo, who wished to be a great man and a happy man, when he grew up: "We can only have the highest happiness, such as goes along with being a great man, by having wide thoughts, and much feeling for the rest of the world as well as ourselves: and this sort of happiness often brings so much pain with it that we can only tell it from pain by its being what we would choose before everything else, because our souls see it is good. And so, my Lillo, if you mean to act nobly and seek to know the best things God has put within reach of men, you must learn to think of that end, and not what will happen to you because of it."

This universal self, this life of sympathy and fellow-service is the movement of the indwelling spirit among men. And does it not follow that as we yield to this influence and enter more and more into the varied interests of others, their labors, their sorrows, their joys, their ambitions, our own lives become nobler, more beneficent, more Christ-like, more worthy to reveal the Fatherhood of God unto other men!—*George D. Latimer.*

We can't choose happiness either for ourselves or for another; we can't tell where that will lie. We can only choose whether we will indulge our-

selves in the present moment or whether we will renounce that for the sake of obeying the divine voice within us—for the sake of being true to all the motives that sanctify our lives.—*George Eliot.*

THE BRIDGE BUILDER

An old man, going a lone highway
Came at the evening, cold and grey,
To a chasm, deep and vast and wide
Through which was flowing a sullen tide.
The old man crossed in the twilight dim,
The sullen stream had no fears for him
But he turned, when safe on the other side
And built a bridge to span the tide.
"Old man" said a fellow pilgrim near,
"You are wasting strength in building here;
Your journey will end with the ending day
You never again will pass this way.
You've crossed the chasm, deep and wide
Why build you the bridge at eventide?
The builder lifted his old gray head:
"Good friend, in the path I have come" he said
"There followeth after me today
A youth whose feet must pass this way.
This chasm that has been naught to me
To that fair haired youth may a pitfall be.
He too, must cross in the twilight dim.
Good friend, I am building this bridge for him.

Peter Lower was digging away at the weeds in his potato-patch. "Makes it harder to have the weeds so thick, don't it?" remarked Lem Beebe, leaning over the fence. "Nope; easier," declared Pete; "you don't have to walk so far to the next weed."—*Everybody's.*

"No, sah, ah doan't neber ride on dem things," said an old colored woman looking in on the merry-go-round. "Why, de other day I seen dat Johnson boy git on an' ride as much as a dollah's worth an' when he git off I sez to him, 'Yo' spent yo' money, but whar yo' been?'"—*Ladies' Home Journal.*

Teacher was hearing reading lessons and little Freddy was reading. Freddy: "'I'm havin' a good time,' said Arty." Teacher: "That will not do, Freddy, read that again." Freddy: "'I'm havin' a good time,' said Arty." Teacher: "That is no better, Freddy, you have left out the 'g.'" Freddy: "'G, I'm havin' a good time,' said Arty."—*Ottawa Evening Citizen.*

A handful of good life is better than a bushel of learning.

He that stumbles and falls not, mends his pace.

Were there no hearers, there would be no backbiters.

The mill cannot grind with water that is past.

Where the drink goes in, there the wit goes out.

A bad laborer quarrels with his tools.

He that once deceives is ever suspected.

NANTUCKET'S FIRST CUP OF TEA

Cousin sent from Boston yesterday by a trusty messenger a large box of tea, the first that was ever on the island, real Chinese tea, which Nat himself procured in China. It is of a greenish color, with little shriveled leaves, and when eaten dry has a pleasant, spicy taste.

We have just had tidings that Cousin Nat and his friend, Captain Morris, intend to arrive here on the 31st of December. Uncle Nathaniel says we will have a tea-party to sit the old year out and the new year in.

We cooked a beautiful dinner and our guests all came. I wore my new blue gown with some lace in the neck and tied back my curls.

Aunt Content has been much pestered in her mind because she knew not how to cook the tea and serve it, and after our neighbors had arrived she confided to them her perplexity.

Mrs. Lieutenant Macy said she had heard that it ought to be well cooked to be palatable, and Aunt Edward Starbuck said a lady in Boston who had drunk tea told her that it needed a good quantity for steeping, which was the reason it was so expensive. So Aunt Content hung the bright five gallon bell metal kettle on the crane, and putting a two quart bowl full of tea in it, with plenty of water, swung it over the fire to boil.

When I was laying the table I heard Lydia Ann say, "I heard that when tea is drunk it gives a brilliancy to the eyes and a youthful freshness to the complexion. I am afraid thy sister-in-law failed to put in a sufficient quantity."

So Aunt Esther put another bowl full of the tea into the kettle.

When the tea had boiled about an hour, down to a gallon, it was poured into grandma's silver tankard and carried to the table. Aunt Content said to her son and his friend, "I have made a dish of tea for you, but am fearful that I have not prepared it as hath need, and would like your opinion."

Whereupon my cousin looked and sniffed at the tea, and made answer:

"As my loved mother desired my opinion, I must needs tell her that a spoonful of this would nearly kill any one of us here at table."

The captain then said he would instruct me how to draw the tea. "And this young lady," he said, "shall make the first dish of the beverage used in Nantucket."—*The Epicure.*

HOUSEHOLD HINTS

Good Things to Know

Ink stains removed by solution of oxalic acid.

Acid stains, apply pearlash, boil in soapy water.

Iron stains, use oxalic acid or butter milk.

Fruit stains, wet cloth and hold over burning sulphur.

Grease spots, use equal parts ether, ammonia and alcohol.

Rust in iron removed by kerosene oil.

Paint on glass removed by using strong, hot vinegar.

Smoked mica cleaned by washing with vinegar.

Dry putty removed by applying hot metal.

Steel cleaned with unslacked lime.

Marble cleaned by strong lye an quicklime.

Brass cleaned by half ounce alum boiled in 1 pint water.

Paint cleaned by application of common whiting.

Silver cleaned by weak solution of ammonia.

Gold cleaned by soap and water; dry in magnesia.

To extinguish burning oil throw on it flour or earth—never water.

When frying griddle cakes rub the griddle with a pad containing salt; it not only saves fat, but does away with the odor when cooking.

Use fine silk fishline to string beads on—it is almost unbreakable. You can buy a small piece at any sporting goods store.

Keep an old magazine near the kitchen sink or table to stand hot or smoky kettles on. Also useful to tear leaves from to wipe out greasy dishes or frying pans before washing.

Use raisins in puddings whenever possible. They aid in saving sugar.

Wet shoes should be stuffed with paper, which will absorb moisture and prevent the shoes from getting hard.

Before using a clothesline boil it a few minutes to keep it from stretching.

Use plain warm water to wipe up a painted or varnished floor.

To extract juice from onion, cut a slice from root end, remove the skin and place onion on coarse grater, using a rotary motion.

A flannel dipped in boiling water and sprinkled with turpentine laid on the chest as quickly as possible, will relieve the most severe cold or hoarseness.

If it is not convenient to fill flannel bags for the sick room with sand, bran will answer the purpose very well, as it retains heat a long time.

To remove discoloration from bruises, apply a cloth wrung out in very hot water and renew frequently until pain ceases. Raw beefsteak is very effective when applied the same way.

Instead of using a clean towel or cloth to dust off cookies after they are baked, use a paper napkin to remove surplus flour. The napkin can be thrown away after the cookies are baked and there is one less article to be washed.

Save all pieces of fine cloth, like handkerchiefs, napkins or odd pieces of fine muslin. Wash and iron carefully; cut into six-inch squares and pin all together in a neat pile which may be kept in the drawer with clean dish towels. When you wish to strain hot fat or anything needing a strainer finer than a wire one, take one little square of cloth—which I call "strainers"—place it in a wire strainer and pour liquid through. Cloth strainer may be thrown into garbage can after using.

IMPEDIMENTA

The use of the word "impedimenta" in designating the traveler's baggage is very significant. The term really means hindrances, and especially those that hinder the feet, and the hastening pilgrim often finds his progress stayed indeed by hindering trunks and bags, because of delays in transportation that make him wait when he wishes above all things to speed on.

The literal traveler is not the only one thus hindered. The pilgrim along the daily life-path often finds himself encumbered and impeded. Possessions are to be desired and to be valued, but when they multiply till they overflow all reasonable space, when the "things cease to be treasures because there is no place for them, then they become impedimenta." They are hindrances to be removed with resolute hand.

One peculiar snare of womankind is the tendency to keep things. It is not necessarily for sake of hoarding that one refuses or forgets to part with her accumulations, but because of the instinctive reluctance to throw away or to be rid of superfluous belongings. The old tradition that a thing kept seven years turns up useful, is partly to blame for many a moth-eaten store in rag-bag and attic. "Maybe I shall want this some time," is the reflection that stays the destroying or the distributing hand, and the "things" are put away again after each housecleaning rummage.

Then there are the papers that heap the library table and overflow through the house to be piled up in closets and on shelves, waiting to be looked over and read again and scrapbook pieces cut out from them.

The fancy that this will ever be done—any of it, is usually a delusion and a snare. It is as much as mortals can do to read once the papers that come to an ordinary household. Who will ever re-read them? Pity 'tis true. Some of the best and most inspiring of stirring prose and rhythmic verse float by in the drift of print, and

the temptation is strong to island it for a while, in vain hope of going over it again. But the time does not come, and by and by the accumulation is appalling. It would seem often as if the feet were indeed hindered by such impedimenta. It is hard to make a path through.

What is the remedy for the keeping habit? How shall possessions be kept from becoming impedimenta? The only way is to clear up as we go. It takes a deal of determination to do this. The clothes and "pieces" that we may want some time, but probably never shall, should be relinquished and given away where they will do good, and while they may. There must be discrimination in such distribution, of course. We are not to make ourselves destitute of all bits and relics, but the congestion must be relieved, the really hindering "things" taken out of the way between times. There may truly be much sentiment in connection with what has outlived its usefulness, but the thing itself should not be allowed to become a disgrace to its associations. A grimy piece of bric-a-brac or an outworn bit of decoration may have been purchased with pleasure and held its place with pleasant memories, but this only entitles it to that destruction which is honorable retirement, instead of being thrust into a corner to gather more dust and look more disreputable still. If things can be bestowed upon waiting and worthy recipients before reaching dilapidation, how much good they may do! There are always those somewhere within reach who have very few "things."

As for the periodicals, we ought every one of us, if possible, to keep a paper mission in active operation. There are hundreds of places to send reading matter. We need to be very resolute with ourselves and silence the suggestion that "another time" we will read them over." We know we won't because we can't. Let us save at once those treasures too precious to let slip, and pass on the rest with promptitude and regularity. It is vandalism to destroy good papers. Time, trouble and postage spent in passing them on will be found a good investment.

Thus our hindrances may become helps.—*Julia H. Johnston.*

THE NEGLECTED OPPORTUNITY TO DO GOOD

THE following lines of Margaret F. Sangster will bring forcibly to the minds of those who fail to realize the duty and opportunities—so constantly offered to them—of "doing good," the "bitter heartache" which follows from such neglect.

It isn't the thing you do, dear,
  It's the thing you leave undone,
Which gives you a bit of heartache
  At the setting of the sun.

The tender word forgotten,
  The letter you did not write,
The flower you might have sent, dear,
  Are your haunting ghosts tonight.

The stone you might have lifted
  Out of a brother's way.
The bit of heartsome counsel,
  You are hurried too much to say,
The loving touch of the hand, dear,
  The gentle and winsome tone,
That you had no time nor thought for,
  With troubles enough of your own.

These little acts of kindness,
  So easily out of mind,
These chances to be angels,
  Which even mortals find
They come in the night and silence,
  Each chill, reproachful wraith,
When hope is faint and flagging,
  And a blight has dropped on faith.

For life is all too short, dear,
  And sorrow is all too great,
To suffer our slow compassion
  That tarries until too late,
And it's not the thing you do, dear,
  It's the thing you leave undone,
Which gives you the bitter heartache
  At the setting of the sun.

"WHEN Dr. Henry Van Dyke, of Princeton, was a little chap," said a gentleman recently, "I went to school with him. One day before school closed for the Christmas holidays we expected a visit from a certain director. This director always questioned the children about one thing—namely, what they'd do in case of fire. So the teacher coached us all the morning before he came, preparing us finely on the course to be taken if fire should break out.

"Well, sure enough, the director called, but when he got up to address us he said: 'It is good to be here at this jolly Christmas season among so many rosy, smiling young faces. You are a very bright looking lot of children and I wonder what you would do now if I were to make you a little speech on the best way to celebrate Christmas.'

"Quick as a flash young Van Dyke piped out: 'Form in single file and march out quickly.'"
—*From the Christian Messenger.*

PETER

PETER was a fisherman, very humble and very poor. My acquaintance with him began near the seashore at the close of a poor fishing season and was in this wise:

Three years ago, while on a vacation at Kennebunkport, Me., as I was carpentering one morning in my barn, something soft caressed my ankles. On looking down, I discovered a starving cat, whose thin sides scarcely covered his appealing ribs, and whose staggering steps betrayed his famished condition. The story was plain: here was a waif left over from the previous season by some cottager, and who had picked up a precarious living through the winter by catching a few fish from the creek as he was able.

Lifting in my arms the shrunken remnant of a cat, I carried him into the house, where my wife and I prudently ministered to his needs. For the first week he could not walk the length of the veranda without lying down in panting exhaustion; but toward the close of the season he picked up, and became a healthy and appreciative animal. Of course we took him to Tilton, N. H., when we returned to our home at the end of the season. He has given up fishing as an unprofitable occupation, and depends on tried friends for all his supplies.

His peculiar habits are interesting. Like most felines, he studies his personal comfort. The first night he was allowed to stay in the house he found his way to the foot of my bed, and coiled himself in purring content: he has been allowed ever since to sleep at the left corner, near the footboard, on a cloth spread for his accommodation.

He is quite social with us, often following my wife and myself when we go down town in the evening, sometimes turning three corners before he leaves us,—there are unfriendly dogs beyond, —when he dives into a garden hedge, and waits for our return. Two hours later, perhaps, he comes out from the hedge with a little cry of gladness and pilots us to our front door.

He has learned the meaning of a few words associated with his simple needs. "Are you hungry?" is a question that is generally sure to arouse him from his evening meditations, and, if then asked, "Do you want some meat?" he starts for the kitchen where a corner of the floor by the sink is covered with a folded paper. His meat is usually placed on this paper, but he will take a portion from our fingers and carry it from any part of the room to his paper. He is quite particular to keep his food on his tablecloth, putting it back on the paper when it slips off in chewing. "No! No! Nothing more!" is sufficient to end his teasing for additional feeding. The question, "Peter, do you want some catnip?" will call him almost any time to my chamber where a tin box is kept containing the fragrant herb.

Gratitude, said to be left out of cats, is certainly manifested by Peter. At the time of feeding, when his meat is placed on his paper, if I continue near him, he will cease eating, rub his head in gratitude against my hand, and then return to his food.

He often coaxes us to play ball, and some other games that he has learned, but enjoys an hour's ramble with us in the woods the best of anything.

Although Peter is no longer a fisherman, the discipline of that winter when he was an outcast has worked out for him the profitable fruit of self-reliance, and enabled him to become the aristocratic lord over his range at our end of the street, as intruding cats and dogs, who have felt the sharp weapons concealed in his great paws can testify.

But how about the heartless family at the summer resort who went back to their fashionable life in the city and left such an intelligent animal as Peter to starve?—*J. M. Durrell, in Our Dumb Animals.*

In accord with the educational policy of Postmaster-General Harry S. New and First Assistant John H. Bartlett, Postmaster Arthur C. Lueder of Chicago has made an agreement with the superintendent of schools to teach children how to wrap parcels properly. The National Education Association, composed of school superintendents and teachers throughout the country, has also taken the matter up. Because people are either careless or do not know how to wrap parcels securely, property amounting to thousands of dollars is lost every year. Last year, in the Chicago department alone, post-office employees put new paper and string on 471,350 parcels that had broken or become untied. Other thousands were so badly wrecked that they could not be sent on their way, but were eventually sold at public auctions.

Uncle Sam urges the observance of these directions:

Use plenty of strong twine. Do not rely on paper tape, it tears and becomes unsealed.

Be sure that the contents of your parcel cannot shift, as shifting often breaks the paper or punctures it so that articles fall out.

Use plenty of packing around loose objects, particularly those of metal that have sharp edges, as they are likely to cause damage.

Put your name and address inside, as well as on the wrapper.

In sending books, be sure to stack them so they cannot buckle, thus causing the parcel to split open.

Do not use too much moisture on the stamps, as it wipes off the glue.

THE LAW OF EFFORT

It is a teacher's experience that every man teaches himself. The class room and the instructor are opportunity and example, but nothing is accomplished without the student's effort.

Sometimes, indeed, the very best teaching seems to be thrown away because of the pupil's inertia, and the only thing that saves the teacher from condemnation is the recollection that a horse may be led to the water but cannot be forced to drink. The remark that against dulness even the gods are powerless is far from true. Dulness and slow wits yield to the process of education. The desperate case is that of inertia. Against that, indeed, the gods are helpless.

Outside of the class room I often find an astounding inertia. One invites attention to Shakespeare, or Emerson, or Beethoven, or Michael Angelo, and the neighbor with a lazy shrug remarks simply that he does not appreciate poetry or music or painting. The idea seems to be that to appreciate these great things you must be born with an extra sense or a special gift, but the idea is invented as an excuse for laziness, and under the baneful influence of this idea many a man remains stunted and undeveloped. Clement of Alexandria has a fine saying about it. God, he says, conspires with willing souls, but if they abandon their eagerness, the spirit bestowed by God is also restrained. Sir Isaac Newton was asked how he came to make his great discoveries. He answered: By always intending my mind. He did not claim a special gift of which other men were devoid. He believed that the great insights came to him simply because of intense and persistent application of attention.—*Francis A. Christie.*

God has made his world beautiful. He has given us all opportunity to be beautiful. We are human and make mistakes, but they should be forgotten, except when the error may be used as a stepping stone to better, greater things.

One should never give pain, heartache or suffering to another if it can be avoided "else our lives are incomplete," falling far short of the beautiful. We should carry our own burdens to save another woe.

The present and future are ours, and though we have made a sad failure of the past, we yet have great opportunities of making our lives beautiful and happy and the lives of those about us happy and beautiful. Again, let me quote:

"Look up and not down,
Look forward and not back,
Look out and not in,
And lend a hand."

—*Bluebird.*

Humanity comes often, as Jesus did, crowned with sorrows and burdened with trouble, walking a weary, dusty road, one that is steep and rocky here and set with thorns there. It is for us to strew the way not merely with branches which shall wither and die in a day, as did the multitudes who thus honored Jesus as he entered the city of the Great King, but rather to set the road with living palms of kindness, charity, courage, cheer, love, and forgiveness, which shall take root and grow, till men may walk under shady trees, in whose branches the birds sing and from whose roots the cool springs bubble, soft mosses grow and flowers spring, and there may find rest unto their souls and healing of their wounded hearts.—*R. F. Johonnot.*

The great thing in this world is not so much where we stand as in what direction we are moving. To reach the port of Heaven, we must sail sometimes with the wind and sometimes against it; but we must sail, and not drift nor lie at anchor.—*Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.—*Psalm cxli, 3.*

A man has simply highly to determine that he will work the works of God. He knows that the Power which makes for righteousness has in centuries upon centuries succeeded. The world is a better world than it was a thousand years ago: it was a better world then than it was a thousand years before. And this man allies himself to omnipotence. He does the thing that he was set to do. A man with this confidence in what Paul calls "the righteousness of God," or the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, or the grace of God cannot really fail. It is of him that Isaiah writes that he "mounts on wings as eagles, he runs and is not weary, he walks and is not faint." —*Edward Everett Hale.*

Learn these two things: never be discouraged because good things get on so slowly here, and never fail daily to do that good which lies next to your hand. Do not be in a hurry, but be diligent. Enter into the sublime patience of the Lord. Be charitable in view of it. God can afford to wait; why cannot we, since we have Him to fall back upon? Let patience have her perfect work and bring forth her celestial fruits. Trust to God to weave your little thread into a web, though the patterns show it not.—*George MacDonald.*

BEST BOOKS FOR THE FAMILY

There is nothing like a list of "best books" to start an argument. Few will be satisfied with your choice. The National Federation of Women's Clubs, however, offered prizes for "the best suggestion of how an annual book allowance of one hundred dollars might best be spent for reading matter in a family of five" and the first prize went to Mrs. Winifred King Rugg of Arlington, Massachusetts. Regarding her list we quote from the *Des Moines Capitol:*

"She chooses 'a good daily newspaper first and six magazines for her family and then proceeds with deliberation to collect a permanent library.' Her list includes: 'The American Commonwealth' by James Bryce; 'Everyman's Encyclopedia,' 'Epochs of American History' by A. B. Hart; 'Medieval and Modern Times' by J. H. Robinson; 'Child's History of the World' by V. M. Hillyer; 'Life of Lincoln' by Lord Charnwood; 'Making of an American' by Jacob Riis; 'Memories of a Hostess' by M. A. De Wolfe Howe; 'Queen Victoria' by Lytton Strachey; 'Marbacka' by Selma Lagerlof; 'Representative Men' by R. W. Emerson; 'Golden Treasury of English Lyric Verse' Palgrave edition Everyman's Library; 'Golden Treasury of Modern Lyrics,' Laurence Binyon, Editor; 'The Divine Comedy' by Dante; 'Dante, How to Know Him' by A. M. Brooks; 'Mind in the Making' by J. H. Robinson; 'The Challenge of Youth' by A. E. Stearns; 'Green Mansions' by W. H. Hudson, Modern Library; 'Cloister and the Hearth' by Charles Reade, Everyman's Library; 'Henry Esmond' by William Makepeace Thackeray; 'Kenilworth' by Sir Walter Scott; 'Westward Ho!' by Charles Kingsley; 'David Copperfield' by Dickens; 'The Three Musketeers' by Dumas; 'Les Miserables' by Hugo; 'The Forsyte Saga' by John Galsworthy; 'The Hawkeye' by Herbert Quick; 'The Three Black Penny's by Joseph Hergesheimer, and 'The Little French Girl' by Anne Douglas Sedgwick.

"Comprehensive as it is, we find it difficult to account for certain omissions in this list. We realize that the restriction of one's funds to even the considerable figure of one hundred dollars would put a difficulty in the path of the person accumulating a permanent library, even tho he knew that a similar amount would be forthcoming each year. Our own inclination, however, would be to spend the first hundred dollars—after the newspapers and magazines had been arranged for—in acquiring a few sets of standard authors, Dickens, Scott and so forth."—*Literary Digest.*

A MILE WITH ME

O WHO will walk a mile with me
Along life's merry way?
A comrade blithe and full of glee,
Who dares to laugh out loud and free,
And let his frolic fancy play,
Like a happy child, through the flowers gay
That fill the field and fringe the way
Where he walks a mile with me.

And who will walk a mile with me
Along life's weary way?
A friend whose heart has eyes to see
The stars shine out o'er the darkening lea,
And the quiet rest at the end o' the day,—
A friend who knows and dares to say,
The brave, sweet words that cheer the way
Where he walks a mile with me.

With such a comrade, such a friend,
I fain would walk till journeys end,
Through summer sunshine, winter rain,
And then?—Farewell, we shall meet again!

—*Henry Van Dyke.*

SELECTED

I FIND there is no worthy pursuit but the idea of doing some good to the world. Some do it with their society, some with their wit, some with their benevolence, some with a sort of power of conferring pleasure and good humor on all they meet.—*John Keats.*

For what should we live? Is it not to succor those who need us, to make paths a little less rough for tired feet, to bring smiles to faces hardened by anxiety or tear-stained, to kindle hope in souls that despair?—*J. T. Sunderland.*

The true test of character is where what is borne or done must remain unknown, where the struggle must be begun and ended, and the fidelity be maintained, in the solitary heart.—*Ephraim Peabody.*

The religious frame of spirit that we most need to gain is to feel that God is near to us; that all things are filled with his presence; that the universe around us is a living expression of his goodness; that all which we enjoy is not so much benevolence, sending down its gifts from afar to us, as it is the energy of his love working within us.—*Orville Dewey.*

The universe is keyed to righteousness, and, whenever and wherever a human soul turns toward the light, the work of recovery, of rebuilding a life, has begun. By toilsome ascent up the steps of virtue, even a Lady Macbeth may, at last, find peace.—*W. D. Simonds.*

O Eternal God, Who art without beginning of days or end of years, from whom cometh all our life, pardon, we beseech Thee, the sins of Thy children, wherein we have darkened Thine own image within us. Let not our light die away amid the common toil and daily care, but so glorify our life with Thy spirit that we may gladly present both souls and bodies to Thy service, an acceptable sacrifice, and, learning to love Thee above all things, may be approved in Thy sight as true disciples of Thy Son Jesus Christ. Amen.—*William E. Gaskin.*

SIN has many tools, but a lie is the handle that fits them all.—*Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

Your judgments of others are in reality the most complete betrayal of yourself.—*F. G. Peabody.*

THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE

ITS PURPOSE

To cheer and comfort those who are ill, lonely, or discouraged, through the exchange of letter and by gifts of books and magazines.

To help those who live far from schools, or who wish to continue their studies by means of corre spondence with a teacher.

To give to those living far from church some of the helps which churches give. One good sermo or similar article is printed in each number. These sermons are never doctrinal, but present onl such simple religious truths and principles as are agreed on by all churches.

WHERE TO WRITE

1. *Letters paying for subscriptions to the paper,* fifty cents a year, should be sent to the Cheerf Letter Exchange, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. Checks or postal orders should be made payab to the Cheerful Letter Exchange.

2. *Letters asking for correspondents, for books, magazines, cards, etc., also letters offering to gi books, magazines, etc.,* should be sent to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 25 Fairmount Way, Quincy, Mass See special suggestions under the heading of the "Book and Magazine Club" in this numbe

3. *Letters asking for help in studying at home* should be sent to Mrs. George O. Sands, Brimbl Ave., North Beverly, Mass.

The Home Study Committee has on hand a variety of schoolbooks which may be used b students either at home or in the schoolroom. The aim of the teachers is to help in any study whe help is needed. Often this may fit a person for a higher grade of work.

4. *Letters about the establishment of Circulating Lebraries* should be sent to Mrs. H. A. Steven 26 John St., Brookline, Mass.

A circulating Library will be started in any small community needing one, if proper location an care can be furnished and satisfactory references can be given. One hundred and fifty-nine librari are now on our list.

5. The Secretary of the Cheerful Letter Exchange, Miss Ethel L. Hersey, Hingham, Mass should receive the more general correspondence from workers on the local committees, or from othe interested in the organization and its methods.

Only books of an instructive or wholesomely amusing character should be offered. Classic educational works, and standard novels and magazines are always acceptable.

There is a large call for scraps of calico, gingham, and percale for patchwork.

> *You talk of the fire of genius. Many a blessed woman, who dies unsung and unremembered, has given out more of the real vital heat that keeps the life in human souls, and without a spark flitting through her humble chimney to tell the world about it, than would set a dozen theories smoking in the brains of so many men of genius.*
> —Oliver Wendell Holmes.

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